



**JOINT READINESS TRAINING CENTER AND FORT POLK
CIVILIAN PERSONNEL ADVISORY CENTER
FORT POLK, LOUISIANA 71459-5341**

*"ARMY CIVILIAN PERSONNEL PROFESSIONALS--
HELPING LEADERS MEET THE MISSION"*



**CPAC INFORMATION BULLETIN
NUMBER 34**

March 2001

COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES



As a part of our continuing effort to keep the workforce informed, this serves as an update regarding the Commercial Activities (CA) Program.

STATUS OF FORT POLK CA STUDY.

During our last update, we advised that the Fort Polk solicitation was formally issued on 29 Jan 01 and that proposals were scheduled to be provided on 2 Apr 01. At that time, we also noted that the 2 Apr 01 date may have to be changed based upon review of specifications by Government personnel, questions received from the contractors and adjustments identified by the Army Audit Agency (AAA). Adjustments have been made to the schedule. The solicitation has been amended to require the proposals to be submitted by 3 May 01. The initial decision concerning the winner of the competition is now expected to be on or about Jan 02.



Questions are still being received from interested firms and are in the process of being answered. The Management Study will be sent to AAA for their review when it is completed.

If a new date is established for submission of proposals, a modification will be made to the

solicitation and posted on the AAA web site located at <http://www.forscom.army.mil>. You can obtain the status of the solicitation by consulting this web site.

PHASE I RIF PLANNING MAJOR EVENTS.

We are on schedule with the execution of Phase I of our RIF plan. The canvassing of the workforce to determine those interested in Voluntary Separation Incentive Pay (VSIP), Voluntary Early Retirement (VERA), and Voluntary RIF (VRIF) commenced on 1 Mar 01 and will conclude on 19 Mar 01. The results of this survey will be used to (1) determine where to target VERA and VSIP; (2) conduct the MOCK RIF; and (3) prepare the required Realignment Fact Sheet and VERA Request. We will advise you of the results of the survey upon completion of our analysis.

Our next major event will occur during the period 1 Apr 01 thru Jul 01. We will prepare for and conduct the MOCK RIF. In the interim, the Command is gathering the data necessary to support this event.



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CIVILIAN PAY **CORNER**

MILITARY LEAVE FOR CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES



Enactment of Public Law 106-554, on December 21, 2000, has changed the way military leave for civilian employees is processed. Prior to the enactment, military leave taken for active duty, inactive duty training, or engaging in field or coast defense training was chargeable in whole day increments and periods of non-duty (such as weekends) were also chargeable. With the new law, military leave may be charged in one-hour increments and leave will not be charged for periods of non-duty.

This change was effective with the pay period beginning December 31, 2000. The Defense Civilian Pay System (DCPS) requires modification and until such time the minimum charge will be one day. DFAS is currently evaluating when the changes will be in place and for the interim, developed certain steps that are to be taken to correctly charge Military Leave for periods of non-duty, as well as certain work arounds to avoid erroneous conversations to another leave type or Leave Without Pay. A description of these work arounds is attached.



Corrections to time and attendance for military leave taken prior to December 31, 2000, must continue to be reflected in daily increments and must also consider non-duty time. **When system changes are in place, military leave balances will automatically be converted to hours.**

Our Customer Service Representative is aware of this change and is making certain that all timekeepers are informed. Since this change creates an additional workload for these

individuals, DFAS is taking special care and effort to make certain that all system changes are provided in a timely manner. We will keep you posted!



BENEFITS AND ENTITLEMENTS

THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN (TSP) CHANGES

There are a number of upcoming changes to TSP. The following changes will be effective May 1, 2001:

- ◆ Two new funds, the Small Capitalization Stock Index Investment (S) Fund and the International Stock Index Investment (I) Fund, will be available.
- ◆ Employees will be able to make direct contribution allocations at any time using the TSP Web site, the Thrift Line, or a TSP-50, Investment Allocation, the new allocation form.

In addition to increased contribution levels described Jan 01 bulletin, the following changes will be implemented during the May 2001 Open Season:

- ◆ Employees will use a new version of the TSP-1, Election Form, to start or change contributions.
- ◆ New hires and rehires will be able to participate immediately.



TSP THRIFTLINE & WEB SITE

Contacting TSP Using the Telephone, Mail or Web -

The Thrift Investment Board administers the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). The TSP Service Office handles loans, interfund transfers,

designations of beneficiaries, and withdrawals for all participants. The address and telephone numbers are below:

TSP Service Office National Finance Center P.O. Box 61500 New Orleans, LA 70161-1500	Telephone: (504)255-6000 Fax: (504)255-5199 TDD: (504)255-5113 Monday through-Friday 7:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.cent time
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You can access the TSP web site for forms, brochures, and information. "Account" access allows you to:

- Review your (monthly) account balance.
- Review the loan amount available to you and the current loan interest rate.
- Review the previous month's status of your withdrawal payment.
- Review the current status of your loan application.
- Request, change, or cancel an interfund transfer.
- Request or customize your four-digit TSP Personal Identification Number (PIN).

You will need your Social Security number and a separate four-digit TSP Personal Identification Number (PIN). The Thrift Investment Office previously notified you of your PIN, but if you forgot it, or do not know your TSP PIN, you can request a new one from the Account Access section of the CPOL site or from the ThriftLine ((504) 255-8777).

TSP RATES OF RETURN



The monthly C, F, and G Fund returns represent the actual total rates of return used in the monthly allocation of earnings to participant accounts. The returns are shown after deduction of accrued [TSP administrative expenses](#). The

C and F Fund returns also reflect the deduction of trading costs and accrued investment management fees. The most current C, F, and G Fund rates of return are shown below. Percentages in () are negative. **Returns are updated after the monthly allocation of**

earnings, usually by the 7th business day of the month.

	<u>C Fund</u>	<u>F Fund</u>	<u>G Fund</u>
February 2001	(9.12%)	0.87%	0.42%
Last 12 Months*			
(3/2000 - 2/2001)	(8.19%)	13.51%	6.20%

* The C, F, and G Fund returns for the last twelve months assume, except for the crediting of earnings, unchanging balances (time-weighting) from month to month and assume that earnings are [compounded on a monthly basis](#).

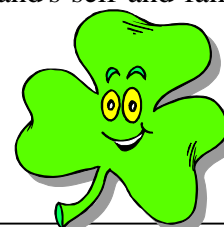


FROM ABC-C

BENEFITS & ENTITLEMENTS HAS BEEN ASKED

Q. Two federal employees are married to each other. Both are enrolled in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP), self-only coverage. The wife is retiring and has met the requirements to continue FEHB coverage into retirement. Both individuals will keep their self-only enrollment for the time being. After the wife retires, the couple decides they want a self and family enrollment. The wife (annuitant) cancels her enrollment in the FEHBP and her husband (employee) changes his enrollment to self and family. Later, the couple decides they want to change back to self-only enrollments. Can the wife (annuitant) enroll in the FEHBP?

A. There are limited opportunities for annuitants to enroll in FEHBP once they have cancelled their enrollment; this is one. In this particular case, the wife who was previously covered under another FEHB enrollment may continue coverage by enrolling when coverage under her husband's self and family enrollment is terminated.





FEHB ENROLLMENT CHANGES THAT DO NOT REQUIRE AN SF 2809

Enrollees are responsible for telling carriers about certain changes to self and family enrollments that do not affect premium withholdings. These include:

- ♦ addition of certain dependents (such as natural children)
- ♦ addition of a spouse
- ♦ removal of a spouse due to death or divorce

Adopted children may be added when the enrollee provides a final adoption decree to the health carrier. The child is also considered adopted if the adoption decree is interlocutory (a legal action with provisional force) and State law provides that the rights of the child generally are the same as those of an adopted child.



Stepchildren may be added without your employing office's involvement. A stepchild is the legitimate, adopted, or recognized natural child of the enrollee's spouse who is living in the enrollee's household.

Health carriers will accept these changes and family member additions directly from the enrollee. You do not need to complete a SF 2809, Health Benefits Election Form, or obtain any other agency verification in these situations.

If the health carrier has questions concerning the validity of a change, they may ask you, the enrollee, for proof of the event permitting the change. For example, they may request a copy of the marriage certificate when adding a spouse to an existing self and family enrollment.

HOW ABOUT THAT

FEDERAL EMPLOYEES MAY USE ANNUAL LEAVE TOWARD RETIREMENT

ELIGIBILITY

Employees who fall short on time-in-service for retirement eligibility, but face the loss of their jobs due to downsizing, can apply their accrued annual leave in order to reach the eligibility threshold. The new rules also address the use of accrued annual leave for employees, in the same situation, to continue health benefits coverage in retirement.



Recently enacted legislation allows employees who are being involuntarily separated to use their annual leave to achieve initial eligibility for retirement and/or continued health benefits coverage. This right is extended to employees who are transferred or relocated.

Since January 1993, agencies have the authority to retain on annual leave an employee who received a specific reduction in force notice so that the employee may establish initial eligibility for retirement, and/or for continuance of health benefits into retirement. The new rules now give employees who are involuntarily separated the right to use their annual leave to achieve initial eligibility for retirement and/or continued health benefits coverage. In addition this right extends to relocation situations, including transfer of function.

This authority is found in Section 634 of the FY 97 Omnibus Appropriation Bill (PL 104-208) approved September 30, 1996. Section 634 applies solely to employees who are covered by



Chapter 63 of title 5, United States Code (USC) and advanced annual leave may not be used. An agency may not approve use of any other type of leave after the employee has been retrained under a temporary exception nor

can employees be retained on the agency's roles past the date of first eligibility for retirement and/or health benefits.



TIME OFF FOR HEALTH SCREENING

President Clinton signed a memorandum on 4 Jan 01, authorizing up to four hours of excused absence each year to be used for health screening purposes for employees with less than 80 hours of sick leave. However, we have been advised by the Civilian Personnel Management Service that this is under review by the Office of Management and Budget and the Office of Personnel Management and is not available for use at this time. We will keep you updated!



SUPERVISORS MUST APPROVE LEAVE USAGE

On numerous occasions the question of how do we obtain approval for the use of leave has arisen. In most instances, we've been asked, why must an employee personally contact the supervisor to request leave. That is, why can't the employee call and leave a message with a co-worker or leave a voice mail message?

The answer is simple. Only the supervisor, or his/her designee, has the authority to approve leave. It is the supervisor who is accountable for the productivity of the organization and the well being of the employees. Consequently, the supervisor must know first hand the impact of an unplanned absence. The supervisor needs to know what's on the front burner that day. That is, does the employee have meetings scheduled that must be postponed or covered by someone else? Is there a job with a tight deadline sitting on the desk? Is there a customer who has been promised a call? It is

also necessary to determine when to anticipate the employee's return to work. Will the employee undergo major surgery or simply have a cold? Not only that, the morale of others must be considered. No one likes doing someone else's work, at least not on a regular basis. Your contributions to the JRTC and Fort Polk are important and you are really needed around here to accomplish the mission. A policy that permits you to call anyone other than the supervisor sends the opposite message -- the wrong message.



ARTICLES FOR BULLETIN

If you have any suggestions on topics or issues that you would like addressed in future bulletins, please submit them to one of the following:

1. Civilian Personnel Advisory Center
ATTN: Bill R. Chance
2. romerok@polk-emh2.army.mil
3. Call 531-4020/4708

Suggestions will be reviewed and addressed if at all possible.

**//ORIGINAL SIGNED//
DONALD R. MALLETT
Director, Civilian Personnel
Advisory Center**



